organised to commemorate the 40th anniversary of Indo-Turkish Cultural Agreement signed during the visit" of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad to Turky in 1951.

Indo-British Discussion Group

An Indo-British Discussion Group was organised from 6—9 January 1992 at the India International Centre on the theme "Ethnicity, Nationality and Sovereignty". About 12 participants from Britain and 12 participants from India took part in the discussion. The Council provided local hospitality to the foreign participants.

Baba Saheb Ambedkar Birth Centenary Lectures

At the invitation of ICCR, Prof. Marc Galantcr of the University of Wisconsin and Prof. (Ms.) Eleanor Zclliot of Carleton College, Minnesoto, USA delivered the lectures as part of the Birth Centenary Celebrations of Baba Saheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar from the period March 5 to 19, 1992 and March 14 to 23, 1992 respectively in various cities of India viz. Madras, Nagpur, Bombay, Mhow, Lucknow. The lectures were arranged in collaboration with the Ministrv of Welfare.

Symposium of Translators

The Council sponsored Dr. Amrendra Misra, Assistant Editor in the Council to participate in the Symposium of Translators organised by Vernamala, a Socio-Cultural Voluntary Society in Bhubaneswar on 14-15 March 1992.

Safeguarding Interests of Persons of Indian Origin in Fiji

4381. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Diplomatic Missions in Fiji had to be closed down in June, 1990, if so, the reasons therefor; and

(b) what steps the Government of India have taken till date to safeguards the interests of people of Indian origin in Fiji?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI): (a) Yes Sir. The authorities in Fiji asked India on May 23, 1990, to close down its mission in Suya.

(b) The Government of India believes that restoration-of democracy and racial harmony in Fiji is the *sine qua* non of ensuring the welfare of the people of Indian origin in that country. Accordingly, the ■ Government has vigorously pursued these concerns at international organisations and at a bilateral level with countries such as Australia, New Zealand, France, UK, USA and Mauritius.

Formation of Islamic Block

4382. SHRI DHULESHWAR MEENA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Turkey, Iran and Pakistan as part of more stringent fundamentalism have revived .the moribund Regional Cooperation for Development Organisation and delegations from the three countries met in Tehran recently to put life into the inactive group under the new title Economic Cooperation Organisation;

(b) whether the three Islamic republics of the erstwhile Soviet Union—Azerbaijan, Uzbckhistan and Turkmenistan also attended the above meeting apart from two other Central Asian republics sent observers;

(c) whether this meeting also evolved the concept of an Islamic common market;

(d) whether India has studied the implications of this proposal not only from point of view of its purely commercial and economic motivation but also from the point of view of emergence of an Islamic Block; and

(e) if so, what is Government reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI): (a) and (b) In 1985, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey set up the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO). At its first Summit meeting in Tehran on 16-17 February 1992, apart from these three countries. Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan,

Uzbekhistan, Kirghizestan and Tajikestan were represented. Kazakhastan was represented on special invitation.

(c) According to the available information, the Summit meeting agreed to continue efforts to eliminate all tariffs and non-tariffs barriers at the earliest.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) Government favour mutually beneficial, commercial and economic cooperation, not based on religious considerations, amongst various countries.

Bombay Passport Office Premises

4383. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that present office premises of the Passport Office in Bombay is inadequate; and

(b) if so, what steps Government propose to take to remedy the situation?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI): (a) and (b) At present, due to increased input of applications, some shortage in accomodation at Passport Office, Bombay has been felt. It is proposed to overcome it by reviewing record retention schedule and if necessary by acquiring more space.

European Parliament Resolution

4384. SHRIMATI BASANTI SARMA: SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: SHRI KAPIL VERMA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether Government are aware of a resolution adopted by the European Parliament asking for right of self determination for Jammu and Kashmir and also criticising alleged violation of human rights there;

(b) if so, what arc the details thereof and Governments reaction thereto;

(c) whether Government discussed this question with members of British Parliament and officials in U.K.;

(d) if so, what was the outcome thereof; and

(e) what steps Government are taking in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) A copy of the Resolution as statement is laid on the Table of the House *(see* below). The Government has conveyed to the European Parliament our objections to this resolution and its unacceptability.

(c) Since this matter does not pertain to the British Parliament or the British Government, this has not been taken up with them.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) Our missions in Brussels and other European capitals are in regular contact with the members of the European Parliament as well as with the various European political parties to explain our stand on Kashmir and the situation there.

Statement

Resolution on Kashmir Passed by European Parliament on 12-3-1992

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

A. having regard to its earlier resolutions on the situation in Jammu and Kashmir;

B. deeply concerned at the provocative and dangerous march on Srinagar which was recently organized by India's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and which threatens an already volatile situation in the State;

C. expresses seripus concern at the loss of life as a result of the demonstration organized by the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front, which took place on 11th February and for further planned demonstrations;

D. even more worried that another similar demonstration and attempt to cross the line of control is planned for 30th March which could result in more bloodshed and serious consequences;